Preface

*China's Peril and Promise* is an advanced Chinese reader prepared for students who would like to enhance their understanding of modern China in general, and modern Chinese literature and intellectual history in particular, through reading authentic materials. The selections, which span the twentieth century and include essays, short stories, biographies, and criticisms, expose the students not only to a variety of modern Chinese literary genres but to some of the major substantive issues that modern Chinese intellectuals have faced.

In organizing the reader we have paid special attention to length, difficulty, and genre. The first three selections, although drawn from a time span of fifty years, share the theme of urging the Chinese people to dare to speak out about problems in their surroundings. The second part of the collection includes short stories that reflect cruelty, hypocrisy, inequality, and other evils in Chinese society. Biography has always played a major role in Chinese historiography, thus, to a certain extent, the accounts of Lu Xun, Hu Shi, and Mao Zedong in Part Three can be read as thumbnail sketches of modern Chinese history. Part Four, on "criticism," includes essays on issues that many modern Chinese have discussed and pondered. The unity that underlies all four parts is Chinese intellectuals' concern with both peril and promise in modern China's destiny.

The reader consists of two volumes. The first contains the selected texts, printed in both traditional and simplified characters, and some discussion questions on each. There are also brief introductions in both English and Chinese to the authors and their works. The second volume includes vocabulary lists and sentence patterns.

We have condensed certain pieces that were, in their originals, somewhat too lengthy for teaching purposes. We have made every effort, however, to maintain the style and spirit of the originals.
The reader has been field-tested for three years, with good results, at Princeton University and in the Princeton-in-Beijing summer program.

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